National Rest Area Conference 2014

Asheville, North Carolina

History of Rest Areas

Rest areas have been a part of our highway system since 1919.

With the building of the interstate system in the 1950's rest area design was relatively standardized.

History of Rest Areas

- Many were built early in the interstate program and typically provided about 35 diagonal parking spaces for cars and 12 parallel spaces for commercial motor vehicles.
- 30 years ago a typical commercial motor vehicle was 35 feet in length.
- Rest areas were spaced about every 50 miles or 1 hours driving time apart

Studies and stats

- 60% of surveyed drivers admitted to driving drowsy.
- 2AM-6AM and 2PM-4PM are the times that nonbraking single vehicle accidents occur.
- Driver fatigue accidents multiply by 6 from 12AM to 6AM.
- Driver fatigue collisions decreased substantially from rest areas to a point 30 miles down the road.
- According to a CALTRANS 2009 report

Studies and stats

- A 1997 NY state study found that 80% of CMV drivers stated limited and timed parking were reasons for not using rest areas.
- A 2002 study contained in the CALTRANS study found that drivers preferred rest areas that provided food, fuel, showers and phones.
- Although there are incidents of criminal activity at rest areas nationwide...there are no databases available to show the rate or type of crime being committed.

Studies and stats

 Most crimes nationally involve drug sales, prostitution, strong arm robbery, panhandling and voyeurism have been reported. However serious crimes such as rape, robbery involving a weapon, and murder have also been committed. The isolation and easy escape makes rest areas a prime location.

Accidents

- Most accidents that occur involve CMV's parking or leaving a parked position.
- I-77 Southbound rest area in Iredell County N.C.

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Recommendations

- If feasible redesign the parking to allow for diagonal pull throughs for CMV. Also increase the number of spaces available.
- If feasible have speed bumps or rumble strips installed on the entrance ramps of the rest area. This could be the last defense to prevent an accident with the sleepy or impaired driver
- If feasible redesign the entrance ramps so that the driver has to negotiate a turn. That would prevent a collision from occurring in the parking area. There might still be accident but with only 1 vehicle involved.

Recommendations

- Make sure the rest areas are well lit and free from dense shrubbery around the building.
- If feasible that there is a working phone or cell service and even Wi-Fi available in case of emergencies.
- If feasible an armed officer or private security guard is the best deterrent for crime. To be effective the presence would need to be 24/7.